

TRANSMITTAL # 6

MEMORANDUM

April 8, 2009

TO: Workforce Development Council

FROM: Roger B. Madsen, Director

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SUBJECT: Workforce Transformation "Happenings" across the State of Idaho

ACTION REQUESTED: No Action, Information Only

BACKGROUND:

The Idaho Department of Labor sponsored the Governor's Statewide Workforce Summit November 19, 2008. The two day event brought together approximately 300 individuals from industry, labor, economic development, government and education, to focus on key industries within their region driving economic growth and the associated workforce needs.

Ed Morrison, keynote speaker, is a member of the Center for Regional Development at Purdue University and economic policy advisor for the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development initiative in north-central Indiana. Mr. Morrison provided attendees with tools to develop a collaboration-driven "open-source" economic development approach to addressing regional workforce needs.

There was such enthusiasm and reception to Mr. Morrison's approach to regional talent development that each region of the state will host its own regional workforce summit. The Idaho Department of Labor was successful in obtaining a \$20,000 award from the United States Department of Labor to assist with costs associated with contracting Mr. Morrison to make a presentation in each region. The workforce events must be completed by June 30, 2009.

The *Attachment* provides an overview of the regional workforce development efforts throughout Idaho.

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Attachment

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The Idaho Department of Labor was successful in receiving two Regional Innovation Grants from the USDOL. These grants provide both North Idaho and Eastern Idaho with an 18-month award of \$250,000 each to develop a Regional Strategic Plan as to how each region will transform itself into an economy that is diversified and focused on emerging industries that will provide high growth and high wage jobs. The plan must identify how each region will assist unemployed individuals return to the workforce as quickly as possible and how the plan will be implemented and sustained. Aligning education, workforce and economic development is the key to the strategy.

North Idaho – Workforce Innovation Now (WIN)

North Idaho held several informational sessions and workshops to identify key regional industries and transformational strategies to improve networking and regional collaboration to help retain, expand and recruit a quality workforce for healthcare, construction, manufacturing (including aerospace), tourism and natural resources (including biofuel). Other focuses of this region include image of middle-skill jobs, housing, small business social services and infrastructure.

Regional support from key industries to network and collaborate on this effort has proven successful. They have recently established a networking site on WINNorthIdaho.net.

Eastern Idaho – Regional Workforce Innovation Team (RWIT)

Eastern Idaho's vision includes developing an innovative, competitive economy where talent development opportunities lead to employment in a variety of high growth, high wage careers found within the energy, health care and manufacturing industry clusters. This effort represents an effective utilization and alignment of ongoing economic, workforce development and educational initiatives.

RWIT hosted two successful kick-off events in Idaho Falls and in Blackfoot. The sessions focused on bringing together key community, economic development, workforce development and education leaders to understand the importance of aligning their collective resources to meet the needs of key industries within the community. The goal is to establish formal regional collaboration.

North Central Idaho

North Central Idaho has applied for a Regional Innovation Grant to focus on the following key industries: advanced manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, energy, and construction. USDOL is reviewing the application. The region has received an informal technical review and is in the process of providing additional information. Funding for these grants is highly competitive and may be limited with the new focus on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

North Central Idaho is prepared to take on regional transformation and hosted a workforce summit in 2008 which involved industry, community and education leaders, economic developers and workforce practitioners. The summit resulted in the identification of key strategic workforce goals for the area.

Southwest Idaho

The Idaho Department of Labor is working with the Boise Valley Economic Partnership (BVEP) Business Retention and Expansion Team to develop innovative workforce strategies to meet the needs of the following key industries: healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing as it relates to healthcare and energy and entrepreneur development. As this effort progresses Southwest Idaho plans to apply for a Regional Innovation Grant. This may be difficult with the focus on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

South Central Idaho – Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development – WIRED

South Central Idaho was successful in receiving a \$5 million WIRED grant to diversify their economies in the area of advanced manufacturing, construction and emerging industries including alternative energy. WIRED is a groundbreaking approach to workforce and economic development. Through the WIRED model funded by the USDOL, regions integrate economic and workforce development activities and demonstrate that talent development can drive economic transformation in regional economies.

The following products have been developed or are in the works as a result of the collaborative effort in South Central Idaho.

- Searchable resume database and enhanced job matching capabilities for employers. New customized Job Seeker and Employer Portals.
Lead: Idaho Department of Labor
- Manufacturing Technology Program – First year of a two year program designed to prepare students for a successful career in the field of machining fabrication. This program is a joint effort between Twin Falls High School, Mini-Cassia and the College of Southern Idaho. Equipment is housed at both Twin Falls High School and College of Southern Idaho. Secondary students receive dual credit for participation in the program.
Lead: College of Southern Idaho
- Manufacturing Technology program will complete its second year of curriculum development to include robotics and automation, and the integration of “green technology” imbedded in the curriculum. The program will be designed to meet the needs of the construction, manufacturing and alternative energy industries. The program will also support modular training to meet the customized training needs of new and existing employers. This program will also be provided to at Twin Falls High School and students will receive dual credit.
Lead: College of Southern Idaho
- The Trade and Industry Preparation program is designed to identify potential participants for an untapped labor pool represented by individuals participating in Adult Basic Education and those with limited English proficiency. The program will enhance individual’s basic reading, writing, computation, computer and job keeping skills through contextualized instruction based on construction, manufacturing and emerging industries.
Lead: College of Southern Idaho

- The region contracted with ExecutivePulse to develop a Business Retention Expansion program. This program will focus on the current business environment and workforce opportunities and future needs of manufacturers in the region. This activity will also increase the connection between business, education and workforce partners as solutions are identified to meet these needs.

Lead: Idaho Department of Labor

- Communication plan to increase the awareness of 21st century opportunities in manufacturing, construction, and emerging industries. The communication plan will include the development of outreach and recruitment materials.

Lead: Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization

- The Fundamental Skills Certificate is a collaborative effort from many regional employers and educators. The Fundamental Skills Certificate is the Magic Valley/Wood River Valley's commitment to employers to provide qualified graduates who can compete globally with others for positions in a changing economy. The effort will have students demonstrate high level competencies in the areas of 1) industry directed attendance standards; 2) high levels of work ethics and work habits; 3) computer literacy; 4) oral communication; 5) reading; 6) mathematics; and 7) job site internship training.

Lead: Region IV Development Association

- Vision for transformation of Idaho Works Automated Workforce System to increase ease of use, relevancy and integration of Idaho's automated Workforce System: labor exchange, career information system and labor market information. The Labor exchange system will be enhanced to develop a new job match/referral system, to improve job notification system, to integrate online services, to provide virtual job fairs and to integrate use of social network sites. The Transform Labor Market Information will be utilized to create an easy to use, free to the public, data tool for developing, mining and analyzing labor market information within our region. This will be modeled after a similar tool developed by the Oregon and Washington WIRED project.

Lead: Idaho Department of Labor.